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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

1 JUL 1970

The Honorable David Packard
Deputy Secretary of Defense
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dave,

Thank you for your letter of 24 June 1970 on the need for strengthening the Phoenix/Phung Hoang program in South Vietnam. I fully concur with your efforts to increase its effectiveness and I am aware that there is a shortage of quality middle level management advisors at the province and district levels.

Our Saigon Station believes one important consideration in this shortage of talent is that staff positions at these levels have not been filled by military officers of the appropriate middle grade level. For instance as of 26 June 1970 Phoenix was authorized 59 Majors, but only 34 were assigned at that time and 25 company grade officers were filling Major officer positions. Although authorized 305 Captains, only 99 were assigned on 26 June. Some 206 Lieutenants (48 of whom were 2nd Lieutenants) were filling Captains' slots. One solution would therefore seem to be the assignment of military officers of the appropriate grade and experience to Phoenix billets.

In this latter connection, we have found that experienced military intelligence officers make excellent Phoenix personnel. If experienced military personnel with intelligence backgrounds of the proper grade were assigned to Phoenix, it seems likely that the program would make progress at a much faster rate than in the past.

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Based on our review of the current status of the program, we also offer the following suggestions to improve it:

a. Government of Vietnam(GVN) middle level managers at the province and district chief level should be encouraged to give the program the level of command attention that it merits in accordance with the priorities placed on it by President Thieu and Prime Minister Khiem.

b. Proper targeting procedures should be emphasized as well. Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI) personality files at the District Intelligence and Operations Coordinating Centers should be upgraded by using improved collation techniques so that more and better targeted operations can be run against the VCI. This is particularly true for the district level and above.

c. GVN Province Security Committees should be stimulated to meet weekly and to handle promptly the case load that has been developed by the program for their consideration and action.

With respect to your request for middle management advisors from CIA, I regret that, given current manpower ceilings and our own priority programs in South Vietnam and Laos, I do not see how the Agency could provide the 15 or 20 staff officers that you request. The Agency is currently making a significant manpower input into [redacted] Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRU) programs, [redacted] of the Phoenix effort. For instance, CIA now has [redacted] officers are scheduled to be assigned to South Vietnam as PRU advisors to take up the slack following the withdrawal of the military advisors to that project. In the overall U. S. interest in developing an effective [redacted] it seems preferable

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to continue our level of assistance to [redacted] activities rather than divert this manpower to Phoenix. Realistically, we believe that Phoenix can be effectively staffed from available DOD military manpower provided the right level of personnel is assigned to management positions. 25X1

CIA will continue to man the Phoenix Director's position as requested by Ambassador Colby. We will also be on the lookout for, and refer to you, any applicants for employment or terminating contract personnel who might make a contribution to the advisory effort. In addition we would be pleased to meet with your staff to determine if we might provide either special training or Vietnam experienced instructors which would be of help in your effort to improve the training of your advisors.

I wish to assure you that I share your concern for the future of Phoenix, but believe that the Agency's best contribution can be that of making the maximum intelligence input available, i.e., from the product of our [redacted] PRU efforts. 25X1

Sincerely,

/s/ Richard Helms

Richard Helms
Director

Signature Recommended:

25X1 [redacted]

Deputy Director for Plans

30 June 70
Date

DDP/DC/VNO:WHouston:pc
Distribution:
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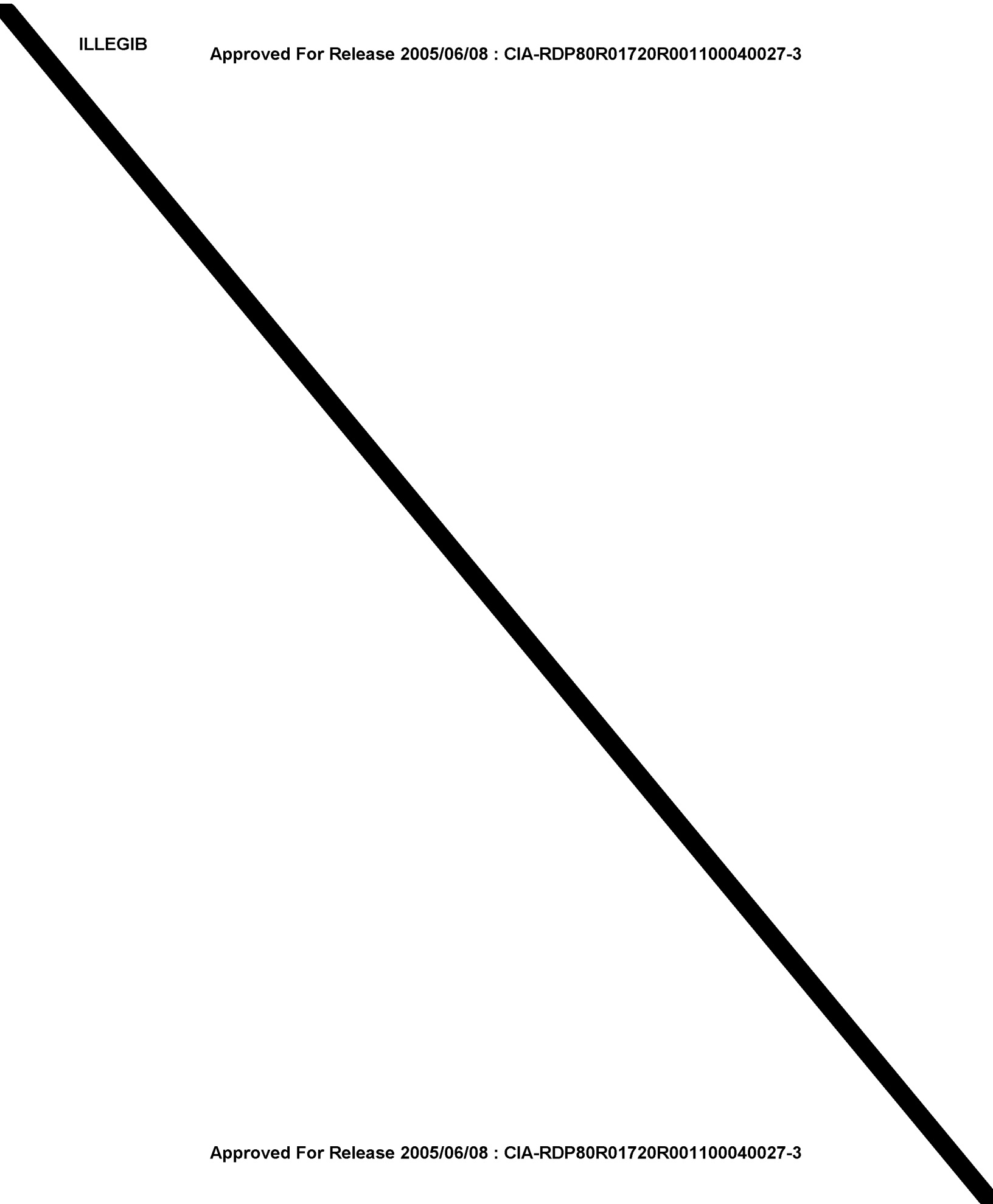

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